

### A Green Industrial Revolution for a Golden State

by Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi

*NOTE: These are my prepared remarks for today's keynote address as the Scripps Seaside Forum, sponsored by the Sustainability Alliance of Southern California, Heartland Foundation-United Green and Scripps Institution of Oceanography.*

It's great to be at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, one of our country's most important research facilities. The work of this institute has led the way in understanding climate change, the effect of the warming oceans and how we can adapt to the inevitable changes in our environment.

I'm here today to talk to you about the next industrial revolution. The world's economies are fueled by carbon based fuels that have polluted our atmosphere and set up a warming climate. Now when I talk about the next revolution, I don't mean the coal-and-oil fueled economy of yesteryear. The irrefutable science of climate change requires that we take a different path, and with sound investments in renewable energy, green technology, and education, we can create a new green industrial revolution that will put countless thousands of our residents back to work.

President Obama understands what's at stake. Under his stimulus package, California is expected to receive more than \$1.5 billion for job-creating alternative energy, energy efficiency, energy conservation, and other energy and climate related efforts. Included in this estimate, the U.S. Treasury and Energy Departments announced that at least \$3 billion in competitive grants will be distributed nationwide to support an estimated 5,000 biomass, solar, wind, and other renewable energy projects. Note to Secretary Chu: consider using some of the \$3 billion as a loan guarantee, thereby expanding the use of the funds.

Incentives for renewable energy generation and installation are also fueling the growth in green jobs. In just the first four months of 2009, solar installations nearly tripled compared to the year prior. Homeowners, businesses, and government all benefit from the California Solar Initiative (CSI), which provides incentives that reduce the total cost of installed systems by an average of 20 percent. Signed into law in 2006, the CSI aims to install 3,000 MW of new solar power by offering \$3 billion in solar rebates over 10 years. Additionally, businesses and homeowners qualify for a federal investment tax credit of 30 percent on renewable energy systems. According to the California Community Colleges Centers of Excellence, the solar industry in California is on pace to produce 40,000 new jobs by 2016.

We are seeing real progress. Today's global economic crisis can be combated with a strong commitment to green job growth. Unemployed construction workers with minimal retraining will begin installing solar panels and wind turbines. Today's college engineering students will be the engineers of the future, designing new renewable power plants. Scientists will find additional resources and demand to research cutting edge renewable energies like tidal, algae, or fusion power. In a very real sense, the future is now.

So where do we go from here? First and foremost, we must recommit resources to education at all levels. The nonpartisan Public Policy Institute of California recently found that if current trends continue, California will have one million college graduates fewer than required to keep pace with our economy's potential growth. As the PPIC explains, "Cuts in education funding work against the state's long term interests. [...] Unless decisions and actions are taken soon to improve educational outcomes for Californians, the state's future economy and the prosperity of its residents will be compromised."

California's future business climate requires a well-educated workforce, yet we are near the bottom in per pupil K-12 spending. When we cut classes, remove extracurricular enrichment, and overstuff classrooms, we deprive our students of the tools they require to succeed in a competitive global economy. From biotechnology to Internet technology, much of California's economic prosperity depends on a scientifically literate population, yet we are at risk of leaving a generation behind. We can do better.

Higher education is also at risk. I used to say California higher education is on a slow road to starvation, but the pace seems to be quickening with every passing year. Adjusted for inflation, student fees have more than doubled at the California State University and University of California, and more than tripled at our community colleges. In 1980, 17 percent of the state budget went to higher education. This year, higher education only received 10 percent. The result: furloughs of professors and staff, 40,000 qualified students will not enter the CSU system, and more than 2,000 will not enter the UC system. These are the engineers, technicians, teachers, and nurses that we need to grow our economy. Bottom line: the best investment is education. It has a \$4.31 return for every dollar we spend. We must reinvest in education, and that is why I support an oil severance charge that would generate more than \$1 billion yearly for higher education.

We are at the forefront of a green industrial revolution, and how we respond to this opportunity determines our state's future. California's success was based on a robust, entrepreneurial private sector and prudent state investments. Job growth, environmental sustainability, and quality affordable education are interconnected like never before. The federal government is providing us with some of the tools we require to jumpstart our economy. Let's take the baton and make California the Golden State once again.

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